



Trials to Triumph: Three Years after Suspension of Production, United States Mint at Philadelphia Receives Safety Award

June 6, 2005

PHILADELPHIA — Three years after the United States Mint at Philadelphia was cited for 81 safety violations (139 specific items), the large coin manufacturing facility was recognized today as one of the safest worksites in the country. The ceremony in front of the United States Mint building in downtown Philadelphia paid tribute to a team of 500 employees, managers and union leaders who joined forces to combat workplace hazards and make their facility a model for safety.

“I am thrilled to be here today to join in commending this facility for the significant strides it has made,” said Acting Deputy Secretary Arnie Havens. “By working together, OSHA, management, employees and union leaders established reforms that have led to meaningful improvements in workplace safety.”

At the close of the award ceremony, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration’s (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Programs’ (VPP) Star status flag was raised, symbolizing a triumphant moment for the facility. In 2002, the facility labored through a six-week suspension of production after United States Mint Director Henrietta Holsman Fore ordered a top-to-bottom review to address the safety issues.

OSHA’s Star status is the highest honor a worksite can achieve under the VPP safety program.

“The women and men of the United States Mint at Philadelphia are true champions in that they have created a bright, clean, safe facility, one that not only complies with Federal safety standards, but also far exceeds them,” said Director Fore.

In 2002, the United States Mint at Philadelphia was cited for 81 OSHA violations with 139 specific examples of unsafe and potentially unsafe conditions. At that time, Director Fore ordered coin production at the Philadelphia facility suspended for six weeks to improve conditions. Employees, managers and two unions worked closely with OSHA to improve standards and strengthen procedures. The facility conducted inspections, self-audits, re-training, and maintenance. Employee injury rates improved dramatically, falling 86%, from 8.38 in 2000, to 1.17 in 2004.

“The Philadelphia Mint’s success is the perfect example of what can happen when an organization fully commits to worker safety and health,” said Richard D. Soltan, regional administrator for OSHA in Philadelphia.

OSHA’s VPP was created in 1982 to encourage excellence in occupational safety and health management. The VPP designation is given to Federal agency or private sector companies that have exemplary safety and health management systems, and have achieved an injury/illness rate below national averages in their industries.

The United States Mint at Philadelphia, with more than 500 employees, is one of six facilities of the United States Mint. In 2004, the Philadelphia facility produced 6.6 billion coins for trade and commerce. The facility also makes official commemorative coins, uncirculated coin sets, and Congressional Gold Medals.

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